

Icebreakers, Energizers & Teambuilding Activities

Compiled by Michele Luc, ACT for Youth Center for Community Action

Candy Confessions (Get-to-Know-You Activity)

1. Choose 1-4 pieces of candy from the bowl without looking (1-2 pieces for a large group, 3-4 pieces for a small group). You, as the facilitator, should play as well.
2. Explain that in a moment, a key code will be revealed. They must answer (aka “confess”) the question that corresponds with the candy they chose.
3. Once the code has been revealed, begin the game by asking for a volunteer to start.

Materials Needed

- Basket of Candy
- Key Code
 - Kit Kats = Favorite Movie or Favorite Song
 - Twix = Favorite Vacation Spot, Place You Would Like to Visit, Place You Would Least Like to Visit, or Worst Vacation
 - Milky Way = Famous person that you’d invite to dinner
 - 3 Musketeers = Something you’re afraid of
 - Starburst = Something about your family or best friends
 - Reeses = Something About Where You Live, Something About Where You Grew Up, Something About Your neighborhood
 - Hershey’s Kisses = Wildcard [tell us anything]

Back Drawing (Energizer)

1. Have teams form a straight line facing the facilitator. The last person in line is given a short list of 6 simple items and shapes. They will then use their finger to trace one at a time onto the back of the team member standing directly in front of them.
2. That team member in turn will trace the shape on the back of the person in front of them, and so on. The goal is to get the first person in line to guess what the shape is once it is traced on their back. They will write each guess on a piece of paper and once they are confident about all 6, they will submit their list to facilitator. Facilitator will score and keep track of who finishes first, second, third, etc.

List of items/shapes:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Heart | <input type="radio"/> Face |
| <input type="radio"/> Tree | <input type="radio"/> Sun |
| <input type="radio"/> Star | <input type="radio"/> Rectangle |

3. Celebrate winners and move on to next challenge.

Hoola Hoop Challenge (Teambuilding Activity)

Supplies Needed:

- Hoola Hoops (one for each small group)
1. Have each team form a circle. All members of team should get down on one knee and hold out an index finger.
 2. Place the hoola hoop in center and instruct group to hold on to the hoop with their index fingers. The object is for everyone to stand while balancing hoola hoop. If they drop hoola hoop, they must start over.
 3. Celebrate winners (group to complete task first) and move on to next challenge.

Magic Carpet Ride (Teambuilding Activity)

Supplies Needed

- One plastic tablecloth (the Magic Carpet)

Total Length of Time: 15 minutes

Activity Description

1. Lay the sheet flat on the floor or ground.
2. Ask everyone to stand on the sheet. (12 to 18 people)
3. Turn the “Magic Carpet” over without anyone touching the floor or the ground in any way. No one may lift anyone off the sheet at any time.

Wrap Up

Discuss the following questions with the group.

1. What was the challenge?
2. How many different solutions did members come up with?
3. What was fun about it? What did you achieve?
4. How were you able to work as a team?

Chair Swap (Energizer)

Supplies Needed

- Chairs in a circle

Activity Description

For this game you will need enough chairs for everyone, except for one person, to have a chair. Arrange the chairs in a circle and have everyone sit down except for the remaining person, who starts off in the middle of the circle. Pick a random starting point somewhere on the circle and have everyone count off (starting with one) until everyone in the circle has a number.

To play the game, have the person in the center call out two numbers. The people who have been assigned those two numbers must quickly switch seats. Meanwhile, the person in the center's task is to get to one of the empty seats first. Whomever is left without a seat starts the game off again in the center, and the players who switched seats assume the number of their new seat. For safety reasons, tell participants that running/diving for a seat, pushing and shoving are not allowed.

Match Game (Get-to-Know-You Activity)

1. Prepare index cards in advance. You can use these and/or create your own

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------|
| a) social | a) media |
| b) Peanut butter | b) Jelly |
| c) role | c) model |
| d) Face | d) Book |
| e) Spaghetti | e) Meatballs |
| f) Jay Z | f) Beyonce |
| g) bacon | g) eggs |
| h) LA | h) Lakers |
| i) lap | i) top |
| j) Romeo | j) Juliet |
| k) french fries | k) ketchup |
| l) rice | l) beans |
| m) You | m) Tube |
| n) Trinidad | n) Tobago |
| o) NY | o) Yankees |
| n) Huey | n) Dewey n) Louie |

2. Have all participants stand in the center of the room. Distribute 1 card per participant. Make sure you have all the pairs in the stack of cards. If you have an uneven number of participants, be sure to use the trio of cards at the end of the list.

3. Explain to group that they only have half the picture...they must walk around and find the match to their card. Give an example, "so if you have Pepperoni on your card, you must look for another card that matches, like Pizza."

4. Instruct group: Once you have found your partner, introduce yourselves (name, organization/school) AND answer the following questions:

- What is the story behind your name?
- What does it mean?
- Why were you named that?
- Do you have any nicknames?
- If you could choose another name, which name would you choose?

5. Once you sense that folks are finished answering question- have them take a seat.

Debrief:

- Have everyone introduce themselves and say what their matches were.
- Invite volunteers share the history/story behind their name.

Musical Chairs (Energizer)

- Play traditional game of musical chairs but have participants who are out answer questions about a particular topic or issue. For example if the topic is pop culture, a question might be, “name a celebrity that you think is overrated.”
- Option B: When someone is “out,” they can save themselves and steal someone else’s seat by answering a question (e.g. which director of, “Get Out” had a TV show with Keegan Michael Key?)
- Option C: Make folks who are out sing a line from a song or a popular jingle.

Word Relay (Energizer)

1. Break the group into 2 or 3 even teams.
2. Line up each team facing the same direction –towards the same wall or blackboard.
3. Post chart paper on the wall so that each team has their own. The chart paper should have the alphabet starting at the top and running down the page.
4. Hand one marker to the first person in line for each team.
5. Explain that this is a relay race that requires a bit of healthy competition. For example, when you say “Leader-1, 2, 3, Go!”, each team sends one person at a time to write a positive word - starting with A - associated with being a Leader. (e.g. “action”). The next person in line must write a word starting with the letter B, and so on.
6. Explain that each team must finish their alphabet relay all the way to Z and that teams cannot call out words to their members. Once they get going you can change up the rules and allow team members to help each other out. They must first give their teammate a chance to come up with their own word.
7. When the relay is finished, review the words to ensure that they are all appropriate (and real words!). The winning team can get a prize (optional).
8. Debrief: Review the words for feedback as well (e.g. *Someone from this team said “caring” – what did you mean by that? How does a leader show that that they care?*)
9. Make sure members from each team have a chance to share.

Human Knot (Teambuilding)

1. Break the group into 2 or 3 teams (8-10 members in each)
2. Have participants stand in a circle.

3. Explain that they are going to create a knot with their hands. You will explain how to do it in a minute. The challenge will be to undo the knot without letting go.
4. Ask everyone to stretch their hands out in front of them. They are to hold hands with 2 people standing across from them. At this point the knot should be formed.
5. They are now to figure out how to get out of the knot without letting go of each others hands.
6. Observe groups to see what their strategies and struggles are.
7. If a group finishes quickly you can ask them to do it again. You might challenge them to try and accomplish the task without talking.

Debrief:

- *How was it?*
- *What are some of the things we can say about working as a team based on this game?*
- *How did it feel to accomplish the task?*
- *Did anyone step up as the leader(s)? What made them stand out as such?*

The Big Wind Blows (Energizer)

(Similar to Chair Swap)

Procedure:

- One person stands in center of a circle of chairs that has one less chair than number of players. Facilitator explains that the object of the game is for the person in the center to grab a seat, leaving someone else standing in the middle. You want to get as many people moving as possible by calling out statements you believe pertain to a large number of participants.
- Rules:
 1. All statements must begin with, *the Big Wind Blows for anyone Who...*
 2. All statements must pertain to the person calling them out; i.e. if you do not wear glasses, you cannot ask people who wear glasses to move.
 3. You cannot move the seats on either side of you.
- Facilitator can kick off the game by running the 1st few rounds; i.e.
The Big Wind blows for anyone who:
 - went to all of their classes today
 - brushed their teeth this morning
 - has traveled outside of the U.S.

The Ultimate Race (Silly Energizer)

Objective

- To demonstrate the importance of following directions and to give the group an opportunity to share the rules and expectations of the group.
- Make sure that the space has enough room for participants to move around

Supplies Needed

- One handout per participant (use handout on next page or create your own). The hand-out is a piece of paper with various instructions on it such as rub your belly, hop on one leg, etc. The instructions should be numbered from 1-10 or 20...however many instructions/activities you can come up with. One of the last instructions should say, DO NONE OF THE ACTIVITIES LISTED ON THIS PAPER.
- Pens/Pencils

Total Length of Time: 15 minutes

Instructions

1. Pass out the handouts and pen/pencils.
2. Instruct the participants to keep them face down until you give the start the game.
3. When everyone has received a sheet, tell them to turn their papers over and begin from the top.
4. Let them move around, talk and act silly. Just make sure that no one gives away the ending.

Wrap Up

- Once the participants have realized that they were not supposed to do any of the activities on the list, make sure they all take a seat.
- Discuss with them how following directions are important in order to not look foolish or make a mistake.

NOTE: [The Ultimate Race Instruction Sheet on next page.](#)

The Ultimate Race Instruction Sheet

Please read all of the directions below before you begin.

1. Shake at least five people's hands...
2. Give five other people high five's...
3. Spin around in a circle ten times...
4. Do ten jumping jacks...
5. Sing "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" to someone you've never seen before...
6. Scream out loud "I am the greatest!"...
7. Crawl under someone's legs...
8. Beat someone in thumb wrestling...
9. Make a fake fart noise...
10. Give someone a back rub...
11. Give yourself a pat on the back...
12. Take off one shoe...
13. Cluck around like a chicken...
14. Pat your head and rub your belly at the same time...
15. Do the Macarena dance...
16. Stand on one leg for 10 seconds...
17. Tell the person standing next to you that they are the best...
18. Do not do any of the things from #1-17...
19. Do not tell anyone about #18...
20. Sit down and cross your legs to show that you've read this...